

Mealtime Memo

FOR CHILD CARE



2003

Menu Planning Makes the Difference

Anyone who has ever fed children knows that just because the meal you have lovingly prepared for them is nutritious does not automatically mean that they will eat it! So how do you encourage a child to eat healthful food?

The ABCs of basic menu planning covered in *Building Blocks for Fun and Healthy Meals* will help you meet this challenge.

It is important to strive for balance when planning meals that you want to be appealing to the young child. Combine mild flavored foods with spicy, stronger flavored choices to achieve a winning combination. Try balancing higher fat foods with ones that have a lower fat content. For example, serve a grilled cheese sandwich with carrot and celery sticks.

A variety of foods is essential when planning interesting menus on a daily basis. Vary the types of main courses you serve. It is important to include a modest amount of a new or unfamiliar food occasionally. Preparing familiar foods in different ways is reasonable provided that the “unusual” way is as appealing as the “usual” way.

Adding contrasts of texture, flavor, and preparation techniques to your menus will enhance the taste and appearance of the food items. When serving spaghetti, a favorite with many young children, offer a green salad or raw vegetable as a crunchy addition to the meal. Use colorful foods in combination with foods that have little or no color. For example, a whole strawberry can add a splash of color to sliced pears or a piece of angel

food cake. Green or red bell pepper strips may be used as an effective garnish when combined on a plate with mashed potatoes and oven-baked chicken. Garnishment should complement the flavor of the food to which it is added. Remember, too, that a sprinkle of paprika or cinnamon can provide instant color to otherwise bland food. Always keep in mind that how the food is arranged on the plate or tray is just as important as how it tastes. That first impression you create with your carefully prepared meal may be the only opportunity you have to win over a child’s timid palate.

Consider regional, cultural and personal food preferences when planning your menus. Introduce new foods one at a time and remember that children frequently will not like new food the first several times you offer it.

There are holidays and special occasions throughout the calendar year that provide numerous opportunities for you to apply your menu planning skills. Keep in mind seasonal availability of fresh fruits and vegetables. Usually when fresh fruits and vegetables are “in season” they are reasonably priced and of top quality.

When planning your own menus, you may want to use the following sample menus as a guide. The components for each meal or snack have been provided for easy reference, so keep this information at hand when planning new menus in your child care home or center. Remember, menus should be planned so that the correct portion sizes for the children being served are met with every meal!



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MEAL PATTERN	DAY ONE	DAY TWO	DAY THREE	DAY FOUR	DAY FIVE
Breakfast Grains/breads Vegetable or fruit or juice Milk, 1%*	Cinnamon raisin bagel Strawberries Chocolate milk Lowfat cream cheese	French toast Apricot halves, canned Milk Syrup Margarine	Raisin bread, toasted Banana Milk Margarine	Pancake Orange sections Maple applesauce topping Milk	English muffin, whole wheat, toasted Apple wedges Milk Jam
Snack Select any two: Grains/breads Vegetable or fruit or juice Meat or meat alternate Milk, 1%*	Pear, fresh Lowfat yogurt, flavored Water**	Graham crackers Peach slices, canned Peanut butter dip Water**	Muffin square Orange juice	Animal crackers Chocolate milk	Wheat crackers Grape juice
Lunch or Supper Grains/breads Vegetable or fruit or juice Meat or meat alternate Milk, 1%*	Mexican pizza Carrots, raw, strips Watermelon Milk Dip for carrots	Not-fried rice Stir-fry vegetables Fresh fruit cup Teriyaki chicken Milk	BBQ beef sandwich Coleslaw Tomatoes, sliced Milk	Peanut butter sandwich Broccoli cheese soup Pineapple cubes in juice Milk	Tuna patty Oven fries Green beans Chocolate milk

*Serving whole milk to children under two years of age is recommended.

**Water is recommended as an additional beverage with snacks; however, water is not part of the meal requirements.

Pancakes with Maple Applesauce Topping*

Serving—1 pancake provides the equivalent of 1 slice of bread

Yield: 25 servings: 25 (4-inch) pancakes

Ingredients	Weight	Measure	For ____ servings	Directions
All-purpose flour Baking powder Salt Instant nonfat dry milk Sugar	1 lb.	3½ cups 2 Tbsp ¾ tsp ½ cup 2 Tbsp 2 tsp		1. Blend flour, baking powder, salt, dry milk, and sugar in mixer for 3 minutes on low speed.
Fresh large eggs Water Vegetable oil		4 each 2½ cups 2 Tbsp ½ cup		2. Combine eggs, water, and oil. Add to dry ingredients. 3. Blend for 2 minutes on low speed, scraping down the sides of the bowl. Batter will be lumpy. DO NOT OVERMIX.
				4. Portion batter with level No. 20 scoop (3½ Tbsp) onto griddle or heavy frying pan, which has been heated to 375° F. (If desired, lightly oil surface.) 5. Cook until surface of pancakes is covered with bubbles and bottom side is lightly browned, approximately 2 minutes. Turn and cook until lightly browned on the other side, approximately 1 minute. 6. Serve immediately or reheat in covered steam table pans (12" x 20" x 2½"). 7. To bake: Conventional Oven 350° F, 10 to 15 minutes

Maple Applesauce Topping

Serving: ¼ cup provides ¼ cup fruit

Yield: 25 servings: 3 lb 15 oz Volume: 1 qt 3 cups

Ingredients	Weight	Measure	Directions
Canned applesauce Maple-flavored pancake syrup	3 lb 9 oz 6 oz	1 qt. 2½ cups ½ cup	1. In a bowl, whisk applesauce and syrup until blended. 2. Use as a topping for pancakes, waffles, French toast, or ice cream.

Sources:

Building blocks for fun and healthy meals, a menu planner for the Child and Adult Care Food Program. (2000). Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service.

**Child care recipes, food for health and fun.* (1999). Washington, DC: United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. FNS-304 Retrieved from http://www.nfsmi.org/Information/ccrecipe_index_alpha.html

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